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Public Waste on Battleships.

BY EDWARD ATKINSON.

The true defense of this country against foreign aggression is in our power of service in the conduct of commerce. The only nations which could venture to attack us — England, France and Germany — are held in bonds to keep the peace with us through the necessity which is imposed upon them to look to the United States as their chief source of supply for food, timber, metal, fibres and fabrics, without which their own domestic industries could not be sustained. True, the agrarians, or great land-holders, of Germany, are now trying to prevent the masses of German people enjoying a full supply of food at low cost, in order that they may secure their own profit. They are the counterparts of the wool-growers of this country, who have made an effort to benefit themselves at the cost of the consumers of woollen manufactures here; who by their interference have put one great branch of industry into very adverse conditions, reducing the consumption of wool from over nine pounds per head to less than seven, with a substitution of cotton and shoddy for the wool which we might derive from other countries. Neither the agrarians of Germany nor the wool-growers of Ohio can long succeed in blinding the country to the evil influence of their attempt to pervert the power of taxation.

Wars of tariffs lead to wars of aggression. Wars of aggression lead to the waste of the public money in building battleships, some of which are constructed under the dishonorable name and for the disgraceful purpose of "commerce destroyers." In the judgment of naval officers of highest repute, the existing navy is all that could possibly be required for the defense of our own shores in the remote event of foreign aggression. To these defenses are now being added the Holland submarine boat, the Maxim boat and other engines of defensive warfare at very moderate cost, which will probably, almost surely, render it impossible for any great battleship to attempt to enter or to put an embargo upon our ports.

Again, nearly every armed cruiser built ten years or more since is now useless. Progress in art and invention is now more rapid than ever. It is safe to prophesy that every armed cruiser or battleship now being put under contract or being finished will be a worthless mass of old junk within ten or fifteen years.

Again, we waste our money on useless marine engines, called battleships, for offensive warfare, which ought never to be put into service and probably never will be, without any prospect of our being able to man or to officer them. The life of the working force in the naval service is not attractive to intelligent men. It is no longer the life of the sailor; it is the life of the stoker, the life of the machinist in the most confined and unwholesome places — a life of monotony, without home, without interest and without prospect of advancement. It is one of the highest signs of progress in our civilization that men cannot be found so ill off among the working people of this country as to induce them to enlist in the naval service in sufficient numbers to man even the present navy. The prospect of enlisting army recruits for the aggressive warfare in the Philippine Islands is yet worse from the point of view of the jingo, — yet more

encouraging from the point of view of a true citizen. Few but dead-beats and degenerates enter that vicious and degrading service.

Again, where are the officers for a greater navy? There are men of high character, standing and ability now in the naval service who are devoted to it and who may be held in highest honor, but what is their prospect? When they die a subscription must be made to support their families. While they live they have no home, no standing place, little opportunity of intellectual intercourse, and only under the stern sense of obligation do many of them remain in the service; many others, witnessing the dreary future and possessing great skill and capacity, leave the naval service, taking higher positions in the useful application of science to commerce and industry.

How shall we account for this war fever which supports the waste in battleships — this spread of jingoism over the land, which makes men blind to moral sense and deprives men of high repute of the power of reasoning? One does not like to utterly condemn men who under the pretext of piety and patriotism have debased the country and dishonored it in their aggressive warfare, and by their effort to deprive the people of another country of their right to liberty. There must be a physical cause. Is it not to be found in that appendix to the brain, or survival from the brute, which corresponds to the appendix in the digestive organs which when congested destroys the power of digestion? This cerebral appendix is said to exist in the mechanism of a blind eye at the base of the brain, apparently fitted for use, except that no ray of light can penetrate it through the outside integuments. When this blind eye becomes congested does it not promote cerebral appendicitis, leading men to put down their heads like butting rams or he-goats? When this disease attacks them they can see nothing through their open eyes, and in the efforts to see through their blind eye they are led to commit robbery, arson and murder, under the name of piety, politics and patriotism.

Jingoism and the spirit which is leading us away from the arts of peace, commerce and industry, — loading us with the burdens of debt and taxes corresponding to those by which European nations are crushed, — may therefore be due to this survival of a brute appendix in the brain of man, engendering the disease of cerebral appendicitis.

BOSTON, Dec. 21, 1900.

Fostering the War Spirit.

BY GEORGE W. HOSS, LL.D.

A press dispatch this morning brings the following concerning the vote in the House of Representatives yesterday on the bill to provide military instructors in the public schools:

"Three bills were passed under the call of committees, the most important being one to provide for the detail of not to exceed one hundred retired army officers and three hundred non-commissioned officers as military instructors in the public schools of such cities as adopt a system of military instruction."

If this is a correct statement of the bill, it makes it possible to have regular military instruction in four hundred schools in the United States, an average of